



How to Get a Bad Smell off Your Hands

Five Methods: [Stainless Steel](#) [Salt](#) [Citrus](#) [Antiseptic Mouthwash](#) [Vinegar and Baking Soda](#)

Preparing food in the kitchen often involves handling ingredients that have a strong, pungent odor. Foods like garlic, onion, and fish have versatile culinary potential, but can lend a strong smell to your hands that lingers long after you've finished handling them. The compounds that are responsible for these odors cannot always be washed away with soap and water, so other remedies must be pursued to eliminate the smell. There are several methods you can use to get a bad smell off your hands after working with strongly scented ingredients.

Steps

- 1 Wash your hands with soap and water.** Before attempting an alternative remedy, it is best to try to eliminate the smell by washing with hand soap and water. Always use cold water for this, as hot water can dilate your skin's pores and let the odor-causing oils and dirt penetrate further. If soap and water do not remove the odor, you should move on to another method.

Method
1

Stainless Steel

- 1 Remove the odor from your hands by rubbing a stainless steel item.** A method that is particularly suited to removing the odor from garlic and onions involves rubbing your hands on stainless steel. Simply take any stainless steel item (such as a piece of silverware or a mixing bowl) and rub it all over your hands under cold running water. Continue until the odor is neutralized.
 - Any stainless steel item will work for this method, including the basin of your sink if you have a stainless steel model. Additionally, you can purchase a stainless steel "soap" made precisely for this purpose. This tool is shaped just like a bar of soap for easy handling.
 - While findings have been inconclusive as to the mechanics of this process, it is generally thought that the sulfur in the garlic (and in many other odorous compounds) binds with the chromium in the stainless steel. This is why stainless steel must be used, and not other iron alloys, as they do not contain chromium.

Method
2

Salt

- 1 Rub your hands with salt.** A gentle and natural way to remove odors from your hands is to rub them with salt. Pour a small amount of salt into your hands and rub them together. You may want to moisten the salt with some water to improve its adhesion. When finished, rinse the salt away with water and dry your hands.

Method
3

Citrus

- 1 Neutralize the odor on your hands with lemon or lime juice.** Rubbing lemon juice on your hands is a natural, effective way to remove odors. Lemon juice can be used full-strength, or it can be diluted with a small amount of water to reduce its harsh effect on your skin. Lime juice works as well. Just squeeze the lemon/lime in a bowl of water and soak your hands in it. Note that using this method will leave your hands smelling like lemon or lime.
 - Freshly squeezed mandarin and orange juice will also work.^[*citation needed*]

Method
4

Antiseptic Mouthwash

1 Wash your hands with antiseptic mouthwash. Rubbing mouthwash onto your hands is another simple method for eliminating strong odors. In addition to neutralizing odor-causing compounds, mouthwash can kill the bacteria on your hands that can cause odor. Scented varieties will also lend a minty smell to your hands that can cover up any remaining odor.

Method
5

Vinegar and Baking Soda

1 Rinse your hands in vinegar. Vinegar is good for removing smells such as fish and onion. Let air dry; the odor of vinegar will disappear after drying but if not, simply wash with soap and water.

2 Make a paste of vinegar and baking soda. Rub over your hands to lift the odor. Rinse under cold water. The odors should be gone.

Community Q&A

How do I get fish smell off my hands?



Rub vanilla extract on your hands for about 30 seconds, then wash with a scented soap and moisturize with lotion.

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Tips

- Wearing gloves when working with strongly scented ingredients will help prevent lingering odors on your hands. You can also purchase specific tools designed to peel and cut ingredients like garlic without requiring hand contact.
- If you're out and about, carry a small container of antibacterial hand soap with a scented flavor. Rub a small amount of this over your hands to remove odors. Do not overuse this soap; it is drying to the skin and too much use may contribute toward bacterial resistance.
- Hand sanitizer could remove the odor, but it could also make it worse.
- Rubbing coffee beans in your hands may be an effective deodorant.

Warnings

- Note that salt, lemon juice, and alcoholic mouthwash can all irritate cuts and bruises on your hands. You may want to avoid these methods if your skin is cut or otherwise irritated.

Things You'll Need

- Soap
- Water
- Stainless steel item
- Salt
- Lemon or lime juice
- Mouthwash

Sources and Citations

- <http://www.thekitchn.com/thekitchn/good-questions/good-question-how-to-get-garlic-smell-off-my-hands-028520>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sophie-brickman/how-to-get-the-smell-of-g_b_127625.html